



The first Lumpkin County High School Student Government Election held with official state voting machines and equipment occurred on Friday August 24, 2007. Principal Tracy Sanford contacted the Lumpkin County Election & Voter Registration Office requesting that a program, similar to that of Forsyth First Vote, be implemented at Lumpkin County. DCT Coordinator Pennie Fowler and Supervisor of Elections Kimberly Pruitt collaborated to make the event happen for the 2007-2008 school year.

There were five separate ballots, one for each grade level and one for teachers and administrative staff. Students were to select their class officers; president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. The senior class was able to choose their senior tee shirt as well. Teachers and administrative staff voted for Teacher of the Year. Principal Sanford insisted that the students be allowed to vote, but were not forced, in order for the students to see how an actual democracy works, if you do not vote, you do not have a voice in your government.

The polls opened by 7:30 am. Students from Ms. Fowler's class manned the check in station where they were quickly trained on how to program voter access cards using encoders. These students had the frantic task of looking up the voters

on the roster, marking them as having voted and issuing the appropriate ballot. Other students manned the check out station ensuring the voter access cards were returned as they issued stickers as proof of voting while other students assisted with crowd control and instructing the voters on how to use the touch screen voting units. All in all, over forty three students served as poll workers. The Lumpkin County Board of Elections & Voter Registration was on hand to monitor and assist. Commissioner Grindle, Sheriff McClure and others came by to witness the occasion.



The polls closed at 2:00 pm and Principal Sanford received the returns by 2:30 pm. Voter turnout was rather high, especially for the first election of its kind at L.C.H.S. Out of 1,319 potential voters, 873 cast a ballot, equaling

66.19 %. Sophomores had the lowest voter turnout – 56.19 %, then freshmen with 66.48 %, followed by juniors with 67.42 % and in the lead were the seniors with 82.11%. Teachers and Administrative Staff had a turnout of 65.88 %. Except for the General Election during a presidential race, the turnout rates for the students were higher than average for Lumpkin County voters.

The goals of this program are to familiarize students with voting equipment so they will be experienced at the polls, instill a love of democracy and an interest in the political process so they will become active and educated voters, and encourage citizenship by serving as poll workers – both at the school elections and, as long as they are over the age of 16, at the polling place. The Lumpkin County Election and Voter Registration Office hopes to recruit at least one high school student to serve at every precinct.

We hope to continue this collaborative effort in order to promote our greatest freedom, the right to vote.

